

the F-22 program. I certainly appreciate the Subcommittee's concerns about the program and am fully aware of the substantial challenges it faced as it sought to reconcile military requirements with available resources. Nevertheless, I believe that the F-22 remains critical to maintaining the air superiority that has proven invaluable to the United States to date and will continue to be fundamental requirement in the future if our interests are to be protected. Indeed, the F-22 program is the Air Force's number one priority.

Mr. Chairman, although I support the bill before us on the whole, I look forward to working with the Subcommittee Chairman and other members of the Committee to ensure that the F-22 is fully funded in the final bill.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT PLAN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. ALBERT RUSSELL WYNN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague ALBERT WYNN (D-MD) on behalf of the citizens of the United States and their requests for a much-needed Medicare prescription drug benefit plan.

Some of the greatest financial difficulties faced by seniors today come as a result of increasingly exorbitant medication prices. As the price of prescription drugs continue to rise, access to these vital drugs decrease concurrently.

Just this week, we received the following petition from the Homecrest House Resident Council of Silver Spring, Maryland. This petition was sent to various members of Congress as well as President Clinton urging us to work together for the institution of a Medicare prescription drug benefit plan. Close to 300 of the residents signed this letter which stretches some seven feet long. It is an urgent plea that not only lays out their own concerns, but also those of seniors nationwide who are constantly restricted financially from obtaining vital prescription drugs.

The petition notes that decreased access to vital medications only contributes to prolonged illness and more frequent hospitalization, which subsequently increases the government's costs of caring for these elderly and disabled citizens.

We ask our colleagues to join with us today in protecting our seniors and in aiding them in gaining access to the prescription drugs to which they are entitled. This petition is yet another visible example of the need for Congress to actively improve and protect the Medicare program. All seniors deserve access to prescription drug medications. It is our duty today to guarantee that access through prompt enactment of legislation that adds a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

I am submitting a copy of the petition we received which clearly illustrates the Homecrest House residents' concerns and requests.

HOMECREST HOUSE
RESIDENT COUNCIL,
Silver Spring, MD, July 8, 1999.

Hon. PETER STARK,
*House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STARK: We are enclosing our petition signed by most of our 300 resident.

All acknowledgment would be greatly appreciated.

We are sure that we voice a concern of our friends around the nation, seniors and disabled, who do without other necessities in order to buy need medications.

We are confident that you will help us and that you and your party will get our vote, because you recognize how critically important it is to make prescription drugs more affordable for senior and disabled persons. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA BENSON,
President.

MARY RYGLER,

Chair, Community Affairs Committee.

Enclosure.

Copies of this petition have been either hand-delivered or mailed to President Clinton as well as several legislators.

As Members of Congress, you hold in your hands the future quality of life of retired and disabled Americans, most of whom worked hard all their long lives and contributed to the greatness of our beloved country!

The 300 Residents of a retirement community in Silver Spring, Maryland who signed this petition, reflect the strivings of most elderly and disabled Americans all over the country!

We are sending to you our urgent plea to address the most vital problem affecting our segment of population and that is the skyrocketing cost of prescription drug!

The fact that many vital medications are out of financial reach of most seniors and disabled contributes to the misery of prolonged illness and more frequent hospitalization, which—in turn—increases the government cost of caring for millions of elderly and disabled.

Please keep in mind that we, seniors, take full advantage of the privilege of voting.

TAX RELIEF

HON. DAVID L. HOBSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues in the Senate for moving forward with a companion measure to the substantial tax relief and debt reduction contained in the Financial Freedom Act of 1999 that this chamber approved last week.

As we move towards a conference with the Senate, I want to urge my colleagues to continue to maintain the high priority we assigned to debt reduction.

When I am back in Ohio's 7th district, my constituents ask me to make sure Congress is paying off its debts, the same way they have to make their credit card and mortgage payments.

I agree with this approach, which will help ensure that we meet our future obligations while reducing the burden the debt represents for our children and grandchildren.

We made the right decision this year, when Congress set aside two-thirds of the surplus

for Social Security and Medicare. This will help keep Social Security and Medicare solvent for the long-term.

Congress also pledged to pay down the national debt. This is a good step—we can put money back into the hands of taxpayers and maintain our fiscal responsibility.

I was very supportive of the "trigger" mechanism which was included in the Financial Freedom Act to make sure that our debt reduction plans remain on track. I urge my colleagues to insist this sensible and responsible provision remains a key priority during our negotiations with the Senate to produce a final tax relief and debt reduction measure.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday 27, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2605) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2605, the FY 2000 Energy and Water Appropriations Act. This \$20 billion bill provides crucial funding to operate the Department of Energy (\$15 billion), which includes funding for renewable energy research; the Bureau of Reclamation (\$784 million); and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) (\$4.2 billion), which builds flood control projects, including \$999,000 to build dune systems and horseshoe crab habitat along Delaware's fragile coastline. The ACOE is also responsible for keeping navigation channels clear, including the Delaware River channel. H.R. 2605 fully funds President Clinton's budget request for \$16.5 million to deepen the Delaware River shipping channel from 40 feet to 45 feet—a project Congress approved in 1992. This funding compliments bipartisan support for \$2 million for this project in Delaware's 1999 bond bill and other funding assistance from New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

I have spent a considerable amount of time researching this project over the last year after concerns about its environmental impacts were brought to my attention. I have reserved judgment on this project until I was satisfied that these concerns had been addressed. I would like to take this opportunity to share with this body some of the conclusions from my research and advocate a course of action for how this project should proceed.

One of the primary environmental issues that have been raised about the project is the impact of the project on water quality standards. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) analyzed ACOE's soil samples and discovered higher concentrations of heavy metals, which I term "hot spots," at two bends in the river. One is located at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers and will not be dredged as part of the project. The second spot is located north of Pea Patch Island. DNREC calculates that if this spot is

dredged properly, water quality standards will not be violated. DNREC and ACOE are coordinating to make sure this spot is properly dredged and disposed at the Killcreek site, where it will be confined and monitored.

I have also raised concerns about the potential impacts of this project on the rate of erosion at Pea Patch Island, which threatens the structural soundness of one of Delaware's historic jewels—Fort Delaware. I have been a strong advocate of providing federal funds to repair the seawall protecting the island. In FY 1999, Congress provided \$750,000 toward the repairs, and the ACOE has assured me the repairs will be made prior to the Delaware River Deepening Project.

It is worth noting that ACOE is not alone in its determination that this project will have no significant impacts on the environment. The state environmental agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have examined the record and independent reports others have produced and they concur with ACOE's conclusion. Combined together, these agencies, which have the proper expertise and authority to evaluate the impacts, present a compelling case. Therefore, I would find it difficult to disagree with their conclusion. Should DNREC or another agency determine that Delaware would suffer unjustifiable environmental impacts, I would be pleased to reexamine this issue.

Finally, the ACOE figures underestimate the benefits to Delaware and the region, because ACOE's regulations prohibit them from taking into account business that ports along the Delaware River may take from other ports in the country. In fact, the Port of Wilmington is taking steps to compete for more business through its recent proposal to move its berth from the Christina River to the Delaware River. Even without this move, ACOE estimates that Delaware will gain over 300 jobs and \$3.4 million in annual tax revenue. Other benefits to Delaware include \$78 million in clean sand material that will be used for creation of wetlands at Kelly Island and Port Mahon. Furthermore, sand deposits placed along Delaware Bay beaches, such as Broadkill will provide storm damage protection against potential annual damages of \$1.6 million each year. All these benefits are attributed to Delaware and Delaware's share of the cost is only \$7 to \$10 million. With estimated tax revenue increases from the project of \$3.4 million a year, Delaware should recoup its cost in less than three years.

I have given the Delaware River Deepening Project close scrutiny. Given the conservative reputation of the ACOE's economic figures, the overwhelming benefits of the project both to the region and to Delaware, the progress in protecting Pea Patch Island, the special attention being given to proper dredging and disposal of the "hot spot," and the overwhelming conformity of opinion by the appropriate environmental agencies, I am satisfied that the economic and environmental justification is strong enough to move forward with funding the project in FY 2000. I also believe Delawareans should be given a strong voice in the future implementation of this project, particularly with the design and construction of the dredge disposal sites. Therefore, I am prepared to contact ACOE and the Environmental Protection Agency to encourage them to accommodate more public input into the process.

Mr. Speaker, ACOE and the Environmental Protection Agency have expressed a willingness to work closer with citizen groups in actively informing them about the progress of the Delaware River Deepening Project to prevent misunderstandings. Although all the interested parties will not always agree on the correct course of action, each one plays a role that is essential to our democratic process and produces a better product in the end.

As with all long-term government projects, the Delaware River Deepening Project must be monitored to maintain cost controls and compliance with environmental safeguards. I look forward to working with the House Transportation and Appropriations Committees in their oversight of this project.

TOWN MEETING

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by a high school student from my home State of Vermont, who was speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today. I am asking that you please insert this statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as I believe that the views of this young person will benefit my colleagues.

[June, 1999]

REGARDING: THE WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA

(On behalf of: Brendan Hurlbut and Anthony Blair)

Anthony Blair: American involvement in the war in Yugoslavia is morally defensible on one level: It is the right thing to do to stop atrocities. But are there not other options for America than to conduct a war against Yugoslavia in which many innocent civilians and American soldiers may be killed? Is it America's duty to be a police force all around the world, even when an action is morally right? Do we want America to be playing the role of international policeman all over the world?

Many reasons have been put forward as to why the United States should avoid being the world's police force in Kosovo. There are reasons, such as the cost. We are spending tens of million of dollars a day. The United States is carrying out about 90 percent of the bombings, while our other allies should be carrying a heavier load than they are carrying right now. Numbers of civilians are being killed by misguided cruise missiles, hitting large groups of innocent people instead of their targeted locations.

Brendan Hurlbut: The U.S. has few strategic or economic interests in Yugoslavia.

And are we really willing to damage our long-term relations with Russia over this issue? Communist and Russian nationalist groups are gaining support for their anti-American message due to this war. Hostile anti-American groups may be aided in their efforts to gain control of Russia due to this war. The threat of force did not stop Milosevic. In fact, some say it has strengthened his position among the patriotic people of Serbia.

Morally, our actions in Yugoslavia are right, but are they in the best interests of our country, and are we not in a way also committing atrocities against innocent people? Can't the U.S. find other ways to stop Milosevic? Obviously, the bombings have not

worked. The U.S. could declare Milosevic a war criminal and pay \$1 billion to whoever captures him. The captors could be also granted citizenship in any one of the NATO countries. This would save lives, money, and maybe a country from poverty.

Current U.S. policy is not consistent. We respond to atrocities in one nation, such as Yugoslavia, but ignore atrocities in other regions, such as Rwanda. If the U.S. now takes the role of worldwide policeman, the U.S. will have to respond to every tribal or ethnic war worldwide. Do we really want the U.S. to be like a puppet on a string that must respond to every problem around the world?

[June, 1999]

REGARDING: TOBACCO

(On behalf of: Andy Tyson, Carey Levine, Zach Pratt, Tina Reed and Doug Lane)

Carey Levine: People who smoke are at increased risk of heart disease, cancer, emphysema and other smoking-related illnesses that contribute to over 420,000 deaths per year. These people dying from cigarettes are our mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, colleagues, peers, and friends. Smoking is no longer just a problem, it is an epidemic that is expanding nationally and globally.

Zach Pratt: In the wake of the recent landmark tobacco settlement, which awarded \$206 billion over the course of the next 25 years to fund programs aimed at aiding smoking victims, debate regarding the most appropriate use of the funds has been fierce. The current proposals vary drastically by state.

According to a recent USA Today poll, popular opinion favors utilizing the appropriated money in an effort to improve public health care systems. Most Americans believe that the tobacco cash should be returned to those most affected by smoking and not split towards expanding health coverage for impoverished or uninsured families. The same poll reports that 27 percent of Americans would like to see the money spent on antismoking education. However, many governors would prefer to see the funds utilized in existing state education programs, feeling that the development of new programs would raise state expenditures to dangerous levels.

Doug Lane: I believe that the money would best be spent in educational programs. The risk of getting addicted to nicotine are reduced through a national educational program targeting preteenagers, and highlighting the negative effects of smoking. The money the government has obtained through cigarette taxes and lawsuits of tobacco companies should be used for preventative measures, to stop this addiction before it starts.

Recently, President Clinton has publicly announced that he is making it part of his agenda to reduce the amount of teenage smoking that goes on in America.

Tina Reed: The "Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco" on Oklahoma's Teenage Facts sheets states that, every day, 3,000 teens smoke their first cigarette, and approximately one-third of these children will eventually die due to smoking-related illness. These are serious enough statistics that they demand a more intensive and proactive stance from schools to encourage students not to smoke.

The new program would take a fresh new approach in informing students about the negative effects of smoking, through hands-on projects such as seeing a healthy lung compared to a smoker's lung, science projects breaking down the actual contents of the cigarette, and guest speakers. Through these types of activities, students will see the devastating effects of smoking